

Distinguished members of the Public Health Committee:

My name is Irene Skrybailo. I am live in New Milford, CT.

I am testifying in favor of HB-5397 An Act Declaring Gun Violence a Public Health Crisis and Establishing the Office of Gun Violence Prevention .

Gun violence is an urgent public health crisis that demands the state invest more to save lives. Last year gun homicides were the highest in 25 years, nearly double the level in 2018.

Beyond the loss of life and profound impact on communities that experience high levels of gun violence, it has a tremendous economic cost. According to [Everytown](#) and [Giffords Law Center](#), it's estimated that gun violence (of all kinds) costs Connecticut taxpayers between \$60 and \$90 million annually, and carries a yearly societal cost of up to \$1.2 billion. It makes FISCAL and MORAL sense to invest in gun violence prevention.

This bill will benefit not the community at large without infringing on rights of law abiding gun owners.

“Despite the majority of the gun owners saying they support many gun violence prevention policies, 59 percent said they think that gun control advocates want to take their guns away. Among gun owners who said they supported universal background checks, 62 percent said that they nonetheless feel alienated from taking part in gun violence prevention because they perceive that gun control advocates are trying to eliminate aspects of gun culture. This is a win for them... this department will not focus on taking guns away from law abiding citizens, but stopping the violence by focusing on rooting out the problems.” (Boston University School of Public Health)

Thank you for your time

Sincerely,

Irene Skrybailo, New Milford CT